

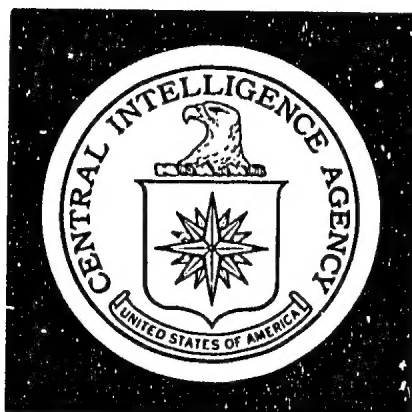
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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

The Naxalites: India's Extreme Left-Wing Communists

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26 October 1970
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
26 October 1970

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Naxalites:
India's Extreme Left-Wing Communists

Introduction

For the last four years India has been plagued by the violent activities of an amorphous group of self-proclaimed "Maoist" revolutionaries known collectively as Naxalites. Dedicated to the armed overthrow of the existing system of government, their use of violence has taxed the resources of the security forces, and law and order is shaping into a major campaign issue in the national elections scheduled to take place by February 1972.

The violence was originally confined to the countryside, but within the last seven months Naxalite operations have spread to the cities and have attracted national attention. Terrorism in Calcutta, capital of the Communist-oriented state of West Bengal, is a growing irritant in an already unstable security situation. Bengal police arrested Kanu Sanyal, a top Naxalite leader, in August 1970. His followers responded with street violence, and the Bengal security authorities--few of whom doubted the Naxalites' ability to unleash a campaign that would grow to major proportions--let it be known that they would not hesitate to call on the Indian Army to maintain order.

The Naxalite movement contains several often-competing organizations that are tied together only

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by mutual rejection of the existing social and governmental systems in India and reliance on violence to achieve their goals. The stated political aim of the Communist Party of India/Marxist-Leninist (CPI/ML), the largest Naxalite organization, is to form a united front of peasants and workers and to provoke a violent revolution that will lead to the establishment of a dictatorship of workers, peasants, and certain middle-class elements. The party urges the creation of a People's Liberation Army and foresees eventual guerrilla warfare on a national scale. The modus operandi of the Naxalites typically consists of organizing the very poor and the landless and goading them into acts of terrorism or the forceable occupation and cultivation of land held usually by large, but sometimes by small landowners. Peasants are encouraged to "annihilate" class enemies and to engage in other activities to "render ineffective the state apparatus" in their areas. The Naxalites refuse to participate in the parliamentary process and denounce all groups, including other Communist parties, that do. In their thinking, "the only way to achieve liberation is by force of arms to overthrow the four main enemies--US imperialism, Soviet social-imperialism, their bureaucratic and bourgeoisie lackeys, and the feudal landlords."

Naxalites have thus far concentrated their efforts in two primary areas: (1) party work in the countryside to bridge the gap between urban leaders and peasant followers; and (2) organization and education of student groups. Recently, particularly in the Communist-oriented state of West Bengal, they have begun to proselytize among urban workers. The number of India's youthful, educated unemployed continues to increase, and, paradoxically, the success of the "green revolution" in agriculture has pointed up the growing disparities between landed peasants who are benefiting from better harvests and poor peasants whose prospects for acquiring land are practically nil. Both students and peasants have become increasingly impatient with the unfulfilled promises of the

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traditional political parties and, by the same token, are more easily seduced by the call to violent revolution and the immediate, tangible rewards it seems to offer.

The Naxalites have made a calculated effort to demolish national heroes--Mahatma Gandhi in particular--as a demonstration of their contempt for "bourgeois ideas." These iconoclastic actions plus their hit-and-run tactics and their spectacular exploits--bombings; murders; book burnings; attacks upon police stations, movie houses, and libraries--have given the Naxalite movement newspaper headlines from which it derives both inspiration and new recruits.

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Many Bihar Naxalites are Suspects in Robbery Cases

JAMSHEDPUR, May 30. In connection with the robberies at the branches of the State Bank of India and the National and Grindlays Bank last year, the Bihar Government has claimed that the entire group of naxalites in the region near the Orissa tri-junction.

Arrested Naxalites confess to bank robberies

Calcutta. Two years ago and its was discovered during a raid on the bank robber was arrested this year in this connection. The RCCI organisation serving robberies, its top

Teenage Naxalite Recruits Disillusioned

CHAMBASA (Bihar), June 1. The teenage naxalite recruits in forest are expressed, after their disillusion of their own she insisted she had lost it in the jungle. She admitted she had lied when the interrogator produced the passport. This was one of her many statements whose veracity is doubted.

New Bengal measures to check Naxalites

Calcutta, Sept. 1. Bengal Government has passed a 1932 Act—the Police Act of Terrorist—to deal with the Naxalites. A hunt for the Naxalites is being launched.

BENGAL ALLOWS POLICE TO CHASE NAXALITIES IN SCHOOLS, COLLEGES

Calcutta. Police are allowed to enter its campus. The State Government would allow police-Chancellors to State schools.

Police Exchange Fire with Naxalites in Bihar Forests

CHAMBASA (Bihar), May 30. The police exchanged fire with naxalites hiding in a forest, near the Orissa tri-junction.

Calcutta Naxalites on vengeful rampage

Calcutta. Naxalites arrested were from Calcutta. Inspector-General of Police S. Ghosh said West Bengal's 60,000-strong police force had been "fully mobilised" on law and order.

Naxalites attack police vans, Top Naxalite Leaders Held in West Bengal

Calcutta. Naxalites attacked police vans. Top Naxalite leaders were held in West Bengal. Their photographs were taken.

Naxalites burn national flag

Calcutta. Naxalites burned the national flag. A rich farmer and his son were killed.

Naxalites kill 2 in Bengal

Calcutta. Naxalites killed two people in Bengal. A group of Naxalites were a jotedar in the district.

Naxalites Behead Landlord in Palghat Village

Calcutta. Naxalites beheaded a landlord in Palghat Village. A house-owner in Masulim village in Monohar.

Rich Farmer Killed

MONGHYR, June 1. A rich farmer and his son were killed. Naxalites were suspected.

Naxalites Wanted in Bank Robberies Held

CHAMBASA, June 2. The 54 naxalites, the Bihar Police forest in Singhpur are absconders in connection with the bank robberies.

Naxalites Kill Villager in Bihar

MONGHYR, Sept. 6. A house-owner in Masulim village in Monohar was killed.

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Formation and Fragmentation of Naxalite Parties

1. The Naxalite movement in India was born out of the frustrations of the radical young over the inability of the existing leftist parties to make immediate, thoroughgoing changes in Indian social and economic life. The pro-Moscow Communist Party of India (CPI) has promised far-reaching change; but, although it has been active in the subcontinent since the mid-1920s, the dictatorship of the proletariat remains a long way from reality, and CPI leaders contest for political offices alongside members of the traditional nationalist parties. The Communist Party of India/Marxist (CPI/M) split off from the CPI in 1964 with the avowed purpose of reforming the Communist movement and returning the party to its true revolutionary values. Three years later, however, it too had failed to make an appreciable dent in the Indian status quo. By 1967 it was participating as the leading member of a coalition government in West Bengal, thus becoming a part of the system it had promised to overturn. Early support from Communist China for the CPI/M evaporated.

2. Inside India, disillusionment with the role of the CPI/M soon developed into open revolt, and in early May 1967 a Committee to Resist Revisionism within the Party, which attracted most of the left extremists, was set up. Almost immediately it found an issue around which it could build national support--the Naxalbari revolt.

3. The Naxalbari revolt broke out in the spring of 1967 in a remote northern subdivision of West Bengal's Darjeeling district. Eventually it spread to cover a 100-square-mile area of highly strategic territory located at the point where a corridor only 13 to 14 miles wide connects the main portion of India with its northeastern states and territories. Originally the revolt was promoted by CPI/M extremists whose emissaries traveled to the Naxalbari area to propagandize among the landless peasants and the Santhal tribals and eventually roused them to open

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revolt against area landowners. By the end of May, the situation in Naxalbari was completely out of control; landowners were forced off their lands, and they and all those who incurred the displeasure of the Naxalites were subjected to continual harassment. The clamor for intervention by the state government became incessant.

4. The state government, dominated by the CPI/M, was most reluctant to move openly against a "people's uprising" and thereby antagonize the more revolutionary young people still in the CPI/M ranks. Finally, however, the government, pressed by the central government in New Delhi, was forced into action. Over 1,000 people were arrested, and the revolt, which from the beginning had little chance of success, was crushed. The violence, however, had attracted national attention, and the peasants and their extremist leaders--called Naxalites after the location of the revolt--were lionized by the left-wing extremists as dedicated fighters for social justice. Naxalite groups began forming in other states, and small-scale outbreaks of violence along the Naxalbari model broke out sporadically in widely separated areas.

5. From the beginning the Naxalites were a heterogeneous group, poorly equipped to found a united all-India movement. An attempt to promote some kind of nationally unified group resulted in the formation of an All-India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCR), which met throughout 1967 and 1968 to discuss strategy and tactics. Factionalism soon developed within this body, however. The West Bengal Naxalites looked to a young revolutionary named Kanu Sanyal for leadership, but Sanyal was unacceptable to many of the Naxalites in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. On 22 April 1969, therefore, the Naxalites of West Bengal decided to launch their own party, the CPI/ML; it has remained the most prominent group among a myriad of similar but competing extremist organizations.

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6. The CPI/M, has been plagued by ideological and tactical disputes and also by personal rivalries. The organizer of the operation in Naxalbari was a dedicated revolutionary named Charu Mazumdar, now generally recognized as the CPI/ML's leading theoretician. The leader in the field, however,



Kanu Sanyal
Chairman, CPI/ML

was Sanyal, who is the party tactician and its chairman. Both are considerably younger than the leaders of the two older Communist parties; Mazumdar, at 50, is the oldest member of the CPI/ML politburo. In mid-May 1970 the CPI/ML held its first congress. Internal disputes immediately surfaced, with approximately one third of the delegates opposing the policy put forward by Mazumdar. This group accused Mazumdar of promoting terrorism rather than

Maoism and questioned the practicality of his program aimed at fomenting immediate revolution. Mazumdar

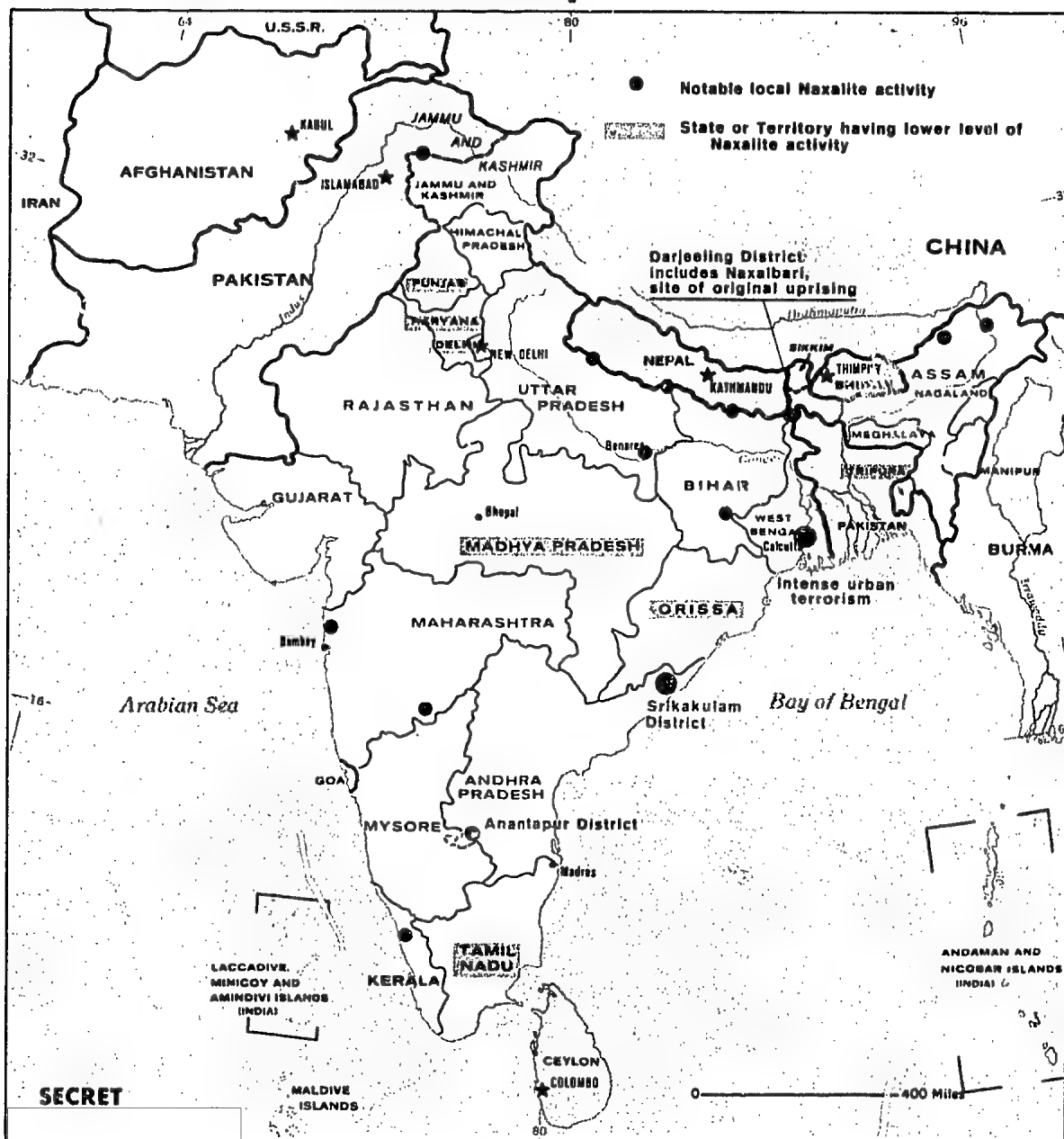
has continued to come under pressure from party cadre who are increasingly questioning his integrity and judgment. Sanyal had spent about six months in detention in late 1968 and early 1969, and was again arrested by the West Bengal police in August 1970. His capture is having a demoralizing effect upon his followers, and, perhaps more importantly, his absence may lead to increased dissension and further factionalism within the party.

7. Other Naxalite organizations are doing no better than the CPI/ML in welding themselves into cohesive bodies. Most are small local groups with fluctuating memberships and irregular activity patterns. In Calcutta, where there are an estimated 4,000 Naxalite supporters and about 200 hard-core activists, as many as eight different Naxalite groups are in existence. Some place emphasis on peasants and students while others concentrate on urban workers. Where the CPI/ML stresses compact "Red

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INDIA: Centers of Naxalite Activity



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Guard" units in the towns and small guerrilla squads in the villages, a smaller Naxalite group calls for mass organizations. Charges of "adventurism" and "revisionism" are hurled back and forth among the various extremist organizations. In January 1970, Naxalite parties opposed to the CPI/ML in West Bengal and other states began attempts to unite. Eventually their efforts led to the creation of the People's (Preparatory) Struggle Committee (PPSC). This body, however, remains little more than a loose confederation whose activities have been limited to sloganeering against the CPI/ML.

Strength and Capabilities in the States

8. The Naxalite movement today is so highly fragmented that it is misleading to speak of "members" on an all-India basis; nevertheless, there are probably some 26,000 people who, in some manner and at some time, have considered themselves allied with the Naxalite cause. Naxalites have been most active (and violent) in the states of West Bengal, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh, but their slogans and wall posters have surfaced in almost every state in the country.

9. West Bengal: Estimates of Naxalite strength in the traditionally leftist state of West Bengal range from 5,000 to 12,000. The CPI/ML is the dominant Naxalite organization in the state, and to be certified for membership, individuals are expected to participate in some sort of "armed action." The membership is weighted toward young people of middle-class upbringing who are either students or among the educated unemployed. CPI/ML strength now appears to be centering in the urban areas, where the party has demonstrated an ability to mount successful hit-and-run attacks. Of late, police officers have become prime targets for elimination as "enemies of the people." Several have been killed by terrorists during the month of October alone.

10. Party theorist Mazumdar calls upon his followers in Calcutta to attack schools, movie

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houses, and other centers of "bourgeois culture." He sees these actions as weakening the established system and provoking police repression that could discredit the government. Such spectacular exploits, he believes, will attract fresh recruits from the student population who can eventually be formed into "Red Guard units to go out to the countryside to educate the rural masses in Maoist thought." "We should not use any kind of firearms," said Mazumdar, as "they will only fall into the hands of the police.... The guerrilla unit must rely wholly on choppers, spears, javelins, and sickles." The few youths who have ventured into the rural areas, however, have found the going rougher than anticipated. Many of these young people have drifted back into the cities where Mazumdar's theory that "the more books you read the more ignorant you become" has led them into the less dangerous pursuits, such as ransacking libraries.

11. Although it still insists on the theoretical primacy of rural guerrilla warfare, the CPI/ML has begun to develop justification for its increasing emphasis on urban terrorism. At its all-India Congress held in Bombay in May 1970, party leaders asserted that efforts should continue in both large urban areas and in the countryside. Party workers, however, were urged henceforth to concentrate on gaining control of the village peasant committees rather than wasting time and personnel on the land-seizure movement. In this manner, it was argued, the rural masses would become politicized and made ready for the violent struggle to come. Urban CPI/ML cadre were admonished to continue to press students to participate in the disruption of educational institutions so that eventually all universities and colleges would be closed and their student bodies polarized.

12. The situation in the countryside remains potentially explosive. Although the Naxalbari agitation has been suppressed, unrest persists, and over the past two years there have been hundreds of incidents involving tribals and peasants attempting to seize land. Much of the land-grab effort,

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however, involves West Bengal's larger and longer-established leftist parties, and the Naxalites' activities have been largely confined to sporadic--albeit spectacular--terrorist exploits.

13. Andhra Pradesh: The south Indian state of Andhra Pradesh has been not only the scene of some of the most recent Naxalite activity, but also the locale of one of the movement's most serious setbacks. The high point for the Naxalites came in the summer of 1969, when for a time tribal extremists led by Vempatapu Satyanarayana were able to set up a secure base in the state's depressed northern Srikakulam district. "People's courts" were organized, and landless peasants and tribals settled down to the cultivation of "repossessed" lands. Landowners who did not acquiesce were brutally murdered, and the Naxalites of Srikakulam soon attracted countrywide attention. By October 1969, however, the revolution was in trouble. The tribesmen's bows and arrows, spears, explosives, and muzzle-loading guns were no match for the modern weapons of the security forces and successive police expeditions. Improved communications and government land redistribution programs gradually succeeded in demoralizing the extremists. The slaying by police of Satyanarayana and a close associate in July 1970 appears to have dealt the movement a crippling blow. Two remaining bands of Naxalites are reportedly sending out feelers on terms for surrender.

14. The Naxalite defeats in Andhra were abetted by the internal confusion and dissidence that divided the movement. Basically, two main extremist groups--Satyanarayana's pro-CPI/ML party and the Revolutionary Communist Party led by Tarimela Nagi Reddi--had competed for domination of the movement in the state. The Reddi group claims to be working for the "Indianization of Maoism," faults Mazumdar's CPI/ML for failure to build a sound political base before launching guerrilla warfare, and condemns the party's blind violence as "Che Guevaraism." For a time the Reddi group managed to occupy lands in the Anantapur district, but in

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September 1969 Reddi was arrested by the Andhra police. Deprived of their dynamic leader, his followers were unable to consolidate their gains, and the landlords were able to take back their lands with little struggle. By June 1970 approximately 1,400 Naxalites had been arrested in Andhra Pradesh; the Sirkakulam Naxalites were reduced to about 2,000, and the Reddi extremists to about 1,000.

15. Sporadic acts of violence nevertheless continue in Andhra Pradesh, and Naxalite propaganda claims that the movement has merely entered the second tactical phase--that of widening the area of operations in order to disperse the police forces and hinder their effectiveness. In June 1970 a clandestine transmitter, called Indian Liberation Radio, was reportedly broadcasting Naxalite propaganda weekly from the Srikakulam district.

16. Bihar: In Bihar, the CPI/ML dominates the extremist scene, but there are at least three competitors. Volunteers, mainly from West Bengal, crossed the border to proselytize as early as 1968, when 20 agrarian clashes were reported. In 1969 the number of Naxalite-inspired incidents rose to 46. Naxalites are also reported to have set up "centers" in the thick forests bordering Nepal and West Bengal. The Naxalites have concentrated their attention on depressed tribal groups in the rural areas, but they are also active in industrial areas and in the universities.

17. The situation deteriorated until mid-1970, when a special squad of Bihar Military Police rounded up a dozen ringleaders. Working in connection with security officers from West Bengal, the state government began to make inroads into the Naxalite areas. Strength estimates vary, but there are probably no more than a few thousand Naxalite-influenced peasants in the state. Nevertheless, Bihar is far from calm, and as late as May 1970 press stories reporting a "reign of terror" in certain districts were common.

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18. Kerala: The history of the Naxalite movement in the Communist-dominated state of Kerala is one of dissension and division. There are at least five groups that are identifiable as Naxalite, and, although CPI/ML leader Mazumdar has visited the state in an attempt to unify the various factions, his efforts have met with little success. By May 1970 it was estimated that there were some 4,000 extremists in the state.



"Class enemy" eliminated by
Naxalites.

19. The particularly brutal turn that the movement has taken in Kerala has antagonized many people. In addition, the state government recently has devoted considerable effort to a land reform program, to some extent cutting the ground from under the extremist organizers. Moreover, effective police action has kept the Naxalites on the move; in April 1970 they were reported to be surviving only as scattered groups, mainly in the Wynaad forest area of northern Kerala.

20. Leaders like Mazumdar have not entirely given up on the state, however, and in late 1969 plans were under way to train squads, consisting of five to seven extremists, to go to villages, propagandize against landlords, and await an appropriate time to expropriate their lands. In April 1970, Kanu Sanyal visited Kerala on a ten-day inspection tour and reported that the state's CPI/ML was not yet defeated. He said that the members were secretly organizing for attacks against the police and other "class enemies." The party appeared to be making headway among university students in May

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In July and August 1970 several particularly brutal murders were carried out by Naxalites, possibly indicating that at least some groups were attempting to follow the plan Sanyal had outlined.

21. Uttar Pradesh: Naxalite activity in Prime Minister Gandhi's home state of Uttar Pradesh--the most populous state in India--is generally considered to carry little threat, although recently the exploits of a few extremists have begun to receive attention in the press. Extremist groups are active primarily in the border districts, and illicit arms are alleged to enter the state along the 100-mile-long border with Nepal.

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22. The police have had some success in moving against the extremists, and in June 1970 the arrest of Bishwanath Tiwari, allegedly the chief organizer of the Naxalites in northern Uttar Pradesh, was reported in the press. Mazumdar has attended one of the state's four regional conferences, but for the most part the violence he advocates has not occurred. The Naxalites thus far appear to be concentrating on propagandizing.

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23. Assam: There are about 500 Naxalites and potential Naxalites in the strategic northeastern border state of Assam. The hard core of the movement appears to be located in the Brahmaputra valley, but there are also bases in the border districts ringing the state. The Assam Naxalites are divided into at least two camps, neither of which demonstrates much ideological similarity to Naxalite groups in other states. For example, aside from rather pro forma demands for land reform, they have eagerly espoused the causes of the area's secessionist-minded tribal groups and have sought to foment trouble among the illegal Pakistani squatters on the Assam - East Pakistan border--pursuits rather far removed from the usual Naxalite concerns.

24. The movement appears to be basically in the propaganda stage, although the Naxalites may recently have begun to step up their activities. Almost 300 Naxalites are reported to have been arrested in Assam this year.

25. Other States: Naxalite activity in the other Indian states is mostly limited to propaganda campaigns, accompanied occasionally by violence. In the west Indian state of Maharashtra, CPI activist Dr. Chaudhary has broken with the party and is likely to set up a Naxalite-like group in his home district of Dhulia, an area heavily populated by disadvantaged tribals. Miss Sunder Nawalkar, another alleged ring-leader is presently being held for trial for her Naxalite activities and during July 1970 a number of other actual and suspected Naxalites in the Bombay area of the state were rounded up. Anti-Naxalite operations have subsequently been extended to Nasik district in the northwestern part of the state and the Osmanabad district in the southeast. "Naxalite visitors" from West Bengal reportedly were active in the Osmanabad area in April 1970

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26. The Naxalites in strategically important Jammu and Kashmir are functioning in a few border

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areas of Jammu, where they have created "pockets of influence," but the Democratic Conference--the state unit of the CPI/ML--is divided within itself and shows few signs of being able to mount an effective campaign. In Haryana, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, and the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu and more recently in Punjab, sporadic Naxalite activities have also been reported.

27. The Naxalite movement in New Delhi was launched more than a year ago, but has made little headway. Activities are concentrated on the Delhi University campus, where approximately 100 Naxalites--about 20 hard-core--have been identified. There is no effective extremist leader on the Delhi scene, although Naxalite leaders from Calcutta and elsewhere regularly visit the campus. The Delhi city government, run by the conservative Hindu Jan Sangh party, maintains a strict watch over Naxalite activities, and the larger and better organized conservative student groups are actively working to combat the Naxalite influence. Despite the university chancellor's intention to admit more students from West Bengal, a move that will tend to increase the number of radicals on campus, New Delhi is likely to remain a relatively uncongenial area for the Naxalites.

Foreign Support

28. Peking Radio outdid itself in applauding the work of the Naxalbari revolutionaries in a June 1967 broadcast; "the emergence of this struggle," it said, "signifies a new state in the Indian people's surging struggle against reactionary rule...with armed struggle as its major force,...using the villages to encircle the cities, and finally taking over the cities." Subsequently, the Chinese recognized the CPI/ML as the "only Communist Party in India." Naxalite leaders have stated publicly that they fully expect the Chinese to supply them with money and arms, but firm evidence of significant Chinese aid is sketchy at best.

29. From the Chinese vantage, the Naxalites primarily represent a propaganda ally against the

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CPI and CPI/M, which--to Peking's mind--are Soviet-dominated revisionist parties. Peking has no desire to identify completely with a losing cause, however, and the Naxalites have yet to prove that they are able to end factionalism within their groups, consolidate their gains, or establish a permanent safe haven. Nevertheless, to the extent that they are capable of disrupting the orderly functioning of the Indian political system, they are worthy of some aid and moral support, and accordingly, the Chinese have provided them with propaganda, occasional financial aid, and training.

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A group of some 15 Naxalites went to China after the 1967 Naxalbari uprising and spent six months touring the country and taking courses in Maoism and guerrilla warfare, according to an article published in the Peking Review in January 1970. The CPI/ML later stated that a second group had gone to China in late 1969, but this visit has not been confirmed.

31. The government of India, long fearful of Peking's designs on the subcontinent, may be inclined to overemphasize the amount of support the Naxalites receive from the Chinese. In early January 1970 the acting director of India's East Asia division in the Ministry of External Affairs told a US Embassy official that in March 1969 a Communist Chinese Embassy official traveled to Calcutta and passed "sizable sums of money to extremists in both the Naxalite CPI/ML and the CPM."

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In fact, there is considerable evidence that the Naxalite weapons are homemade or stolen from government ordnance plants and arsenals.

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32. It is possible that CPI/ML leaders such as Mazumdar and Sanyal have, on occasion, been able to establish contact with Chinese Communists resident in Nepal, but there is no solid evidence to substantiate rumors to this effect. Press reports that a small number of Chinese-made arms have made their way into India across the India-Nepal border are also unverified.

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In March 1969, then Home Minister Chavan announced that some weapons of Chinese origin that had been in the possession of dissident Naga and Mizo tribesmen had turned up in Naxalite hands. There is no evidence that the Chinese Government arranged for the shipments, however, and any arms that have entered the country have probably been smuggled in by private parties.

33. The CPI/ML has been mildly successful in its efforts to establish international links with other Maoist parties. In addition to an alliance with the very small East Pakistani Communist Party/Marxist-Leninist, the CPI/ML has made contact with the pro-Chinese faction of the Burmese Communist Party, although contact with the latter group appears to be mainly useful for propaganda purposes.

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The Pakistani Naxalite group is relatively new--it was founded in April 1970--and, although it may have received money from the Indian CPI/ML, hard evidence regarding the flow of funds is currently unavailable.

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Reactions of Older Communist Parties

35. The two other Communist parties, the pro-Moscow CPI and the more militant CPM, have condemned the Naxalite "adventurers" on ideological grounds, and have warned that the new movement will mean the dissipation of revolutionary energy into self-defeating channels. The CPM is a particularly bitter critic because were it not for the existence of the CPI/ML, the CPM might reasonably expect to fall heir to the allegiance of all the extremist Communist forces. In West Bengal, the CPM is treated almost as the party's main enemy, and friction between the two groups has often led to violence, chiefly among the protagonists' youthful supporters. In August 1970 the CPM decided to found the Students' Federation of India to counteract the growing Naxalite success in gaining student adherents. The CPM has already lost a number of its members to Naxalite factions and is apprehensive that the heavy-handed tactics used to suppress Naxalite terrorism will also be directed against CPM activities and so enrage other CPM cadre that they too will defect to the Naxalite cause.

36. Nevertheless, leaders of the older Communist parties probably have mixed emotions over Naxalite activities. For one thing, the Naxalites may be giving the traditional Communist parties a new chance for respectability. As the extremists increasingly serve as collecting points for antisocial behavior and as lightning rods for moderate and right-wing criticism, the CPM--and more especially the CPI--have tended to be accepted as less dangerous members of the political establishment. Furthermore, there is a strong feeling among the traditional parties' leaders that they should take a tolerant view of youthful dissenters. Any action to expel those members who sympathize with the Naxalites, or even take part in some of their activities, would, they argue, cause unnecessary disruption of their parties and could easily lead to further widespread defections. Far better, they point out, to allow inner-party debates carried out in public to provide a safety valve that could at least slow and perhaps

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prevent additional withdrawals from the traditional parties.

37. The older parties also plan direct action programs to counter the extremists' charge that they have lost revolutionary fervor. Borrowing a page from the Naxalite text, the CPI organized a massive all-India "land-grab" movement in July-August 1970. At its national council meeting in New Delhi in May 1970, the CPI committed itself to revitalize its student fronts.

38. In sum, the tactics of the traditional parties seem to be paying off as both the CPI and the CPM continue to field numbers of dedicated political activists who seek changes more or less within the parliamentary system. The emotional appeal of the Naxalites to students and politically conscious young people continues to be strong, but the older parties, with their well-established power bases in the labor movement and in the state and national parliaments, still have much to offer an ambitious young revolutionary.

Government Reaction to Naxalite Threat

39. For its part, the government has adopted a two-pronged strategy to counter the Naxalite threat. The first is the "get tough" approach, and so far it has been quite effective. State police forces, without the assistance of the army, have been given primary responsibility for dealing with Naxalite violence, and--except in West Bengal--they have needed no outside assistance. The extremist groups have not yet been subjected to all-out police control and repression despite repeated calls by right-wing parties to ban the CPI/ML. Where Naxalites have surfaced to engage in open terrorist activities, they have been sought out; but generally the police have tried to conserve their energies for coordinated district-wide sweeps where the presence of terrorists has been suspected. Intra-state cooperation has usually been good, and

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camps have been established in the border areas to stem the movement of Naxalites from one state to the other. Police units have also been alerted to the movement of Naxalites across the Bihar border into Nepal, where they are suspected of obtaining weapons. There has been talk of re-enacting the Preventive Detention Law which expired at the end of 1969, providing that any person whose behavior is judged prejudicial to the security of India can be detained for up to one year without trial, to curb the Naxalite menace. So far, Prime Minister Gandhi has not had sufficient parliamentary support to push through re-activation of the law. She is, however, reported to be looking for ways to strengthen existing security legislation and is quick to point out that individual states are free to enact preventive detention legislation on their own. Some have already done so and West Bengal is re-examining laws already on the books with a view to applying them as makeshift preventative detention measures.

40. Mrs. Gandhi has condemned extremists who take the law into their own hands, but in order to steer clear of identification with the "forces of repression" she has become one of the main exponents of the second prong of the government's anti-Naxalite strategy--that of fighting Naxalite politics with strenuous efforts to remove the frustrations on which the extremist movement feeds. In keeping with the progressive image she is seeking, Mrs. Gandhi has repeatedly expressed sympathy for the landless and has urged the states to implement existing land reform laws on an emergency footing and to work toward alleviating the frustrations of the educated urban youth. In a few states, such as Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, the governments are increasing land re-distribution in an attempt to reduce Naxalite activity. Most states, however, continue to rely on the effectiveness of their police forces, and there is little to suggest that they will make any serious effort to implement a thoroughgoing land reform program.

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Prospects for Expansion

41. The Naxalites have achieved nationwide notoriety, but--aside from West Bengal and, to a more limited degree, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Bihar--their successes in the countryside have not been widespread. Over the next few years, however, they can be expected to make progress where corruption is rampant, where rural and urban poverty is at its worst, where employment opportunities for the educated young are deteriorating, and where regional parties have failed to establish strong organizations to meet local needs. India's disadvantaged tribal groups will remain particularly fertile fields for extremist exploitation. The Naxalites appear likely to continue, therefore, as a disruptive element in Indian political life, but, given the capability of the security forces, it is difficult to imagine that their threats to create "instant revolution" have much chance of success.

42. The Naxalites look forward hopefully to a period of increased political instability and economic chaos. With the country increasingly divided into warring political and economic factions, they anticipate that, with Chinese assistance, their guerrilla bands will eventually become a people's army which will "sweep the country." It is far more likely, however, that before the country could degenerate into such a state of chaos, the highly institutionalized and essentially conservative military forces would step in to restore order. The Naxalites' hope for Communist China's support may also be badly misplaced.

43. Nevertheless, the Naxalites are a decided liability for Prime Minister Gandhi because their highly publicized exploits suggest that the government is not fully in control of the situation. Their presence produces a sense of insecurity among the people--an insecurity that could work against the ruling Congress Party in the next elections. Moreover, to compete with the Naxalites, whose radical action program has a demonstrated appeal to the young and to the disadvantaged, both the Prime Minister's party

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and the traditional leftist parties--whose support she frequently seeks--may perceive the need gradually to move government policies toward the left.

44. At present, the Naxalite menace is being curtailed if not controlled. Much of the activity attributed to Naxalites in the Indian press is not ideologically motivated but rather stems from student rowdyism, from hooliganism, and from gangsterism. The true Maoist is in a minority as the perpetrator of violent acts in India. As the national elections required by February 1972 approach, terrorist activity, particularly in urban areas, will probably increase, but--based on past performances--it does not appear likely that the Naxalites will be able to coordinate their actions on an all-India basis. For the foreseeable future, the movement appears destined to remain confined to separated and often competing geographic pockets and, barring the emergence of a charismatic national leader, will be unable to launch effectively "the revolution."

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